of the neck without actually damaging the vertebræ is borne out by two instances given by Mr. J. Sowerby. (*Field*, April 5). The writer saw a rabbit killed with a ·303 bullet. Minute examination showed a slight groove cut in the fur on the nape of the neck. There was a slight bruise under the skin. An Oyster-catcher touched in the same spot by a ·25 R. F. bullet which just scraped the skin, succumbed instantly. Apart from bodily injury the instance related by 'Tulloch Ard' of a hare being killed by the concussion of ·303 bullet which was supposed to have hit the ground below him is interesting.

Commenting on the above Mr. D. D. Lyell writes :

'I see nothing remarkable in such an incident, for I consider the concussion produced by the striking energy of such a projectile might easily produce shock sufficient to stop the action of the heart. Also, it does not follow that the heart in every mammal is in good condition, and I expect in both animals and birds that sometimes it is in a groggy state, for we read of creatures falling dead after getting a fright or due to extreme exertion.

Only the other day I fired a ·256 Mannlicher bullet into a sloping grassy bank, and the result was a hole some 8 in. in depth, and a " divot " rebounded backwards for fifteen paces. Now had a hare or rabbit been sitting over the spot, I am certain it would have been killed with the recoil of the earth which was displaced. Had such an occurrence taken place I believe, however, fur would have been removed, and " Tulloch Ard," in the case he noted, did not mention the hare being marked in any way.'

Mr. Meyer in his book *Birds and Beasts of a Roman Zoo* relates the incident of an apparently healthy well-grown Macaque dropping dead from shock on being startled by a sudden clap of thunder.

Mr. Morris' note provides, we believe, the correct explanation of the behaviour of an animal after being shot through the heart. Taking flight or charging after the fatal shot is a reflex action, a response to the impulse imparted by the brain at the moment of its consciousness of danger. The action ceases when the energy 'generated' by the impulse is expended.—Eds.]

X.—THE COMMON MYNAH (*A. TRISTIS*) AS A PEST IN SEYCHELLES

After a long silence may I invite you again to help us on a question of bird destruction in our small colony. I gladly recall the assistance you gave us some 10 years ago when I happened to visit Bombay.

The Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*) was, it appears, introduced here from India a century ago in order to combat the locust plague. As the plague in question never occurred for the last 50 years to my knowledge and, as no swarms of locusts are known to fly over from Africa to Seychelles, the multiplication of mynahs is giving

us some anxiety as they destroy young birds of all sorts in their nests (including pigeons) and have acquired a taste for local fruits of all kinds. I even suspect them strongly of destroying small beetles including the Coccinelids which are so beneficial in combating scale insects.

Before destroying these birds altogether, it seems to be imperative to ascertain from you what are their habits and their food and what harm they are doing in India to your knowledge.

Any assistance from you in that matter would be greatly appreciated.

SEYCHELLES, *February 27, 1930.*

P. R. DUPONT, *Director of Agriculture.*

[In India the Common Mynah is regarded as a bird which is beneficial to agriculture. Occasionally mynahs eat oats, maize and rice from standing crops, but any damage done by these birds is insignificant in comparison with the good they do by destroying hosts of injurious insects of all kinds. Lefroy & Mason in their report on the 'Food of Birds in India' (*Memoirs, Department of Agriculture*, vol. xii), give details as regards the food of the Common Mynah obtained as a result of the examination of the stomach contents of a series of birds. Of 110 insects taken from 35 birds, 58 were identified as species injurious to agriculture, 5 beneficial, 47 neutral. Twenty birds examined by them had eaten various species of figs, oats, maize and paddy grain. The Mynah is not, in India, generally a fruit eater, though a good proportion of its food consists of various types of wild figs. This is apparently the only class of fruit it habitually eats in this country. It rarely does damage in orchards. Of cereals, maize appears to be its favourite, and damage is done to this crop from mid June till the harvest is ended.

Introduced into other countries, the Mynah has not proved beneficial. It is said to be a great nuisance in New Zealand and Hawaii as it drives away pigeons and fowls and destroys the nests and eggs of birds. Change of environment has produced in this species a change of habit.—EDS.]

XI.—ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE GREY-BACKED SHRIKE (*LANIUS TEPHRONOTUS* VIGORS.) IN THE SUBURBS OF CALCUTTA

In the Avi-fauna of Lower Bengal the genus *Lanius* is represented by very few species (or sub-species). These are migratory birds, all except one being rather uncommon visitors, straggling into the suburbs of Calcutta in Winter. Recently a specimen of *Lanius tephronotus* (Vigors.) has through the generosity of Dr. Satya Churn Law been presented to the Indian Museum along with some other